

Section 2

Duxbury Clipper

Thursday, September 1, 1977

MANY DIGNITARIES ATTEND UNVEILING OF PLAQUE

A memorial plaque was dedicated last Friday morning recognizing the Standish Burying Grounds as the oldest maintained cemetery in the U.S.

Daniel White, Duxbury superintendent of cemeteries, welcomed guests and introduced the Rev. Francis Turke, pastor of Holy Family Church, who gave the invocation.

Guests included Philip Conlantuonio, president of the Massachusetts Cemetery Association; George Kilbourn, president of the New England Cemetery Association; John Dangle, executive vice president of the American Cemetery Association, and Duncan Munro, president of the American Cemetery Association.

Unveiling

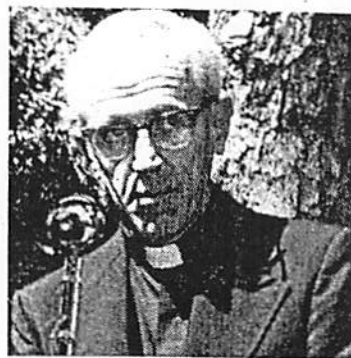
The memorial plaque was unveiled by White, Munro, Dangle and Laurel Freeman, retired Duxbury superintendent of cemeteries.



Daniel White

"On behalf of my board of trustees and myself, welcome to Duxbury, which was incorporated in 1637," Daniel White told almost 200 townspeople and out-of-town visitors. "Rich and proud of heritage, our town and its

Association, Worthington, Ohio, donated, designed and crafted the granite base.



Rev. Francis Turke

Father Turke said in his invocation: "We ask you, Lord, to bless what we do here today. Bless this place, Lord. It is a special place, a holy place. This ground is sacred ground. We pray for those who are buried here -- the settlers of our town and the many who came after them.

"We pray also for all who have maintained this

Burying Grounds History

Dorothy Wentworth, Duxbury Town Historian, gave a history of the Myles Standish Burying Grounds:

This is the burying ground where the settlers of the Pilgrim town of Duxbury lie and here are buried perhaps 7 of the Mayflower passengers -- John and Priscilla Alden, Myles Standish, Love Brewster, George Soule, Peter Brown, and Henry Samson.



Dorothy Wentworth

There were no gravestones for many years other than field stones, and although the earliest is dated 1697, Capt. Jonathan Alden's, many graves were unmarked long after that.

In 1894 there were 122 stones standing, today there are fewer, but there are probably over 500 graves in this small area. One man wrote that in his boyhood, around 1810, he could go in any direction, leaping from one stone to another

among others, you are in the midst of your ancestors.

We can note that one among you, Mrs. Duncan Munro, is descended from George Soule, Pilgrim. You can see the stone in his memory, placed here a few years ago by the Soule Kindred of America. And Mrs. Munro's ancestor Moses Soule about 1700 had a 40-acre farm just to the east of this graveyard.

In the east corner was the meeting house and near that spot is the marked grave of an early minister and in unmarked graves are 2 other ministers of Pilgrim days.

This graveyard has never been called a cemetery. That is a relatively recent term and we use it for our present Mayflower Cemetery, but this is a graveyard, a burying ground, now called the Myles Standish Burying Ground for the captain whose grave is near the center.

When the Standish grave was located nearly a hundred years ago, the 2 pyramid shaped field stones that tradition said were there were definitely identified. They were probably placed there in the 1650s, to mark the graves of Lora Standish and Mary, wife of Josiah. Those stones were put there by the captain himself and his son Josiah. Think on it when you see or touch those old stones.

This old graveyard is hallowed and historic ground where sleep the families who settled Duxbury. It is good to have you so recognize and honor it.

Visitor Speaks

John Dangle addressed his remarks to "the citizens of Duxbury."

When plans were announced for the nation's bicentennial celebration, the American Cemetery Association volunteered its services to the government for whatever assistance we could offer. This offer was based on 4 factors:

struggle for independence is buried in a cemetery somewhere, and we have memorialized their lives and work in these cemeteries, and the American Cemetery Association is one of the oldest and most respected voluntary non-profit associations in the U.S.

Our offer of help was accepted, and the American Cemetery Association was named an official member of the National Service Alliance for the bicentennial, one of only a very few associations so honored.

We conceived and carried out a number of programs during 1976, and cemetery administrators from coast to coast were also involved in observances in their local communities.

Our final project was the most important, and it turned out to be the most difficult: we wanted to identify and recognize the oldest maintained cemetery in the U.S. That we succeeded is evidenced by our assembly here today!

And please understand that we are not just 8 months late with this project! We purposely delayed the dedication of this memorial until this time, so that we could hold it in conjunction with our annual convention in Boston. This afforded the opportunity for more of our elected officials to be present for the ceremony.

When we established the guidelines for this search, particularly the provision that the cemetery must have been maintained continuously, we quickly eliminated a number of very old burial grounds.

We knew, for example that the Spanish explorers had buried their dead in St. Augustine, Florida, America's oldest city. But the headstones used at that colony were made of soft cochina shell rock, and they had disintegrated through the ravages of time and weather, so the original cemeteries have been totally lost.

gratifying occasion to be honored here today and I would like to thank the American Cemetery Association for making this event possible."

Out-of-town Visitors

White introduced the 3 Duxbury selectmen and their executive assistant, Douglas Plunkett; Town Moderator Charles Fargo, William Nash of the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society; Russell Eddy, chairman of the library trustees and trustee of the Harry Grafton Fund; officers of the American Cemetery Association, and Frank Cofran, who represented George Kilbourn, president of the New England Cemetery Association. Cofran is superintendent of cemeteries in Portland, Me.

Other guests were the trustees of Duxbury cemeteries: Donald Jordan, chairman; Dr. Newton Shirley, Ernest Chandler, Carl Santheson III and Richard Locke.

Edward Soule and Clarence Walker, former trustees, were also introduced, as was State Representative Stanley Barnicoat of Middleboro; Laurel Freeman, Daniel Miller, flag custodian; Edward Comolli, manager of cemetery services, Barre Granite Association, Barre, Vt.; Albert Olsen, general manager of Forest Hills Cemetery, Jamaica Plain; John Corwin, superintendent of Milton Cemeteries, Stuart Kennedy, superintendent of Acton Cemetery and Fred Kennedy, retired superintendent of Acton Cemetery; Roger Kindred, assistant manager of the Mount Auburn Cemetery; and Berry Henrick, executive assistant, American Cemetery Association, Columbus, Ohio.

James H. Matthews & Co., of Pittsburgh, Pa., donated the plaque, which was cast in bronze. American Monument

over the years -- and for those who now maintain it. We pray for our guests who honor us with their presence.

"May the plaque that is unveiled today be an effective reminder of our heritage -- and our indebtedness to those who have preceded us. Most of all may it remind us to honor the dead and to pray for them -- keeping in mind what you, Lord, said through the inspired author of the book of Macabees: 'It is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead.'"

"Grant eternal rest to all who are buried here, Lord -- may they rest in peace. Amen."

touch ground. There are graves all around us.

We know where the settlers' families are by the later stones. When we find an 18th Century stone, it is reasonable to assume that it stands amid earlier unmarked family graves. In that way we locate the Aldens in the southwest corner, Soules by the west fence, Bradfords and Petersons by the gate, and so on.

If you are descended from one of the 7 Pilgrims I mentioned, or from such settlers as Philip Delano, Moses Simmons, William Palmer, Constant Southworth or Christopher Wadsworth,



John Danglade

The Myles Standish Burying Ground is the oldest functioning social institution in the U.S.; America's cemeteries are, as our bicentennial emblem declared, "guardians of the nation's heritage"; every leader in our

settlements in Virginia, and on the outer banks of North Carolina, had had burial grounds. But these, too, were lost along with "The Lost Colony." Even the original Plymouth Colony burial ground had not been preserved for posterity.

The final choice was here -- Myles Standish Burying Ground in Duxbury. So let me say that we are really honoring two institutions today: We point to the Standish Burying Ground as the nation's oldest, but we also honor the community of Duxbury, for maintaining these grounds through the centuries -- preserving for all time this place of historical significance.

We recognize, too, the cooperation and assistance of Daniel White and his predecessor, Laurel Freeman. You have entrusted the care of your community's cemeteries to dedicated and highly capable people, and you should be proud of them.

Equally worthy of praise are the help and generosity of the James H. Matthews Company of Pittsburgh, which donated the bronze plaque, and the American Monument Association and its member company in Barre, Vermont, which donated and carved the magnificent boulder on which the plaque is affixed.

And so, we dedicate this monument to the lives of the pioneers of the greatest nation on earth, and to the people who have kept the faith with them by preserving and maintaining these grounds, and to the ideal, the cemetery creed, that a life lived is worthy of remembrance.

Let it stand as a reminder to future generations that in our time, at least, we remembered, and we cared. Perhaps it will inspire the future citizens of Duxbury and of the U.S., that all of this is good, and right, and worthwhile!

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Unveiling the stone at the dedication are John Danglade, Duncan Munro, Laurel Freeman and Daniel White.

UNVEILING From page 17

Remarks of George Kilbourn as presented by Frank Cofran:



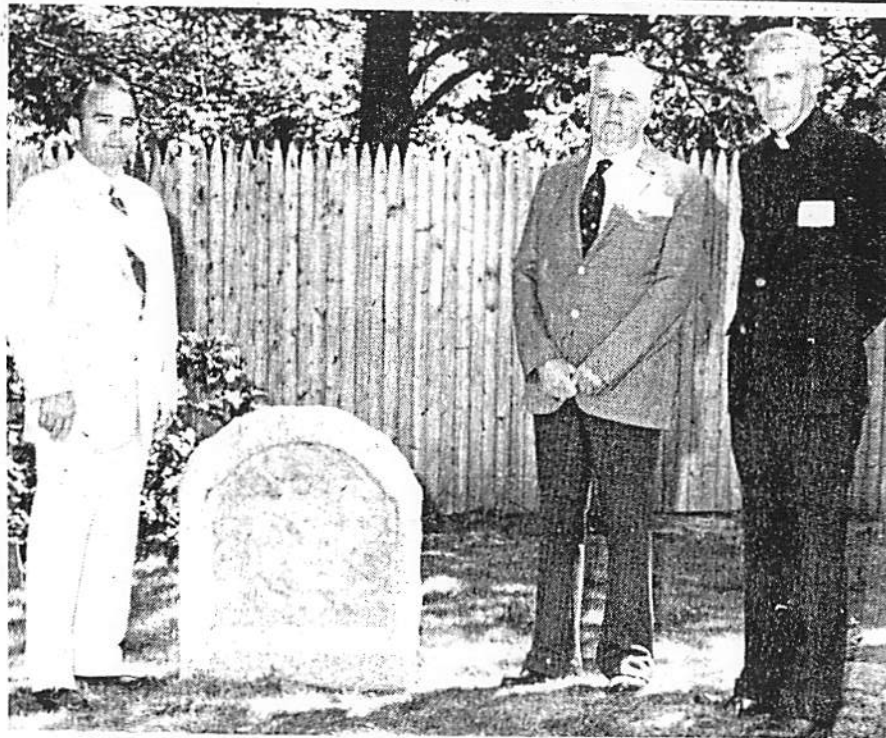
Frank Cofran

To me it is most appropriate that this dedication ceremony takes place here in the New England area where most of the original Mayflower passengers were laid to rest.

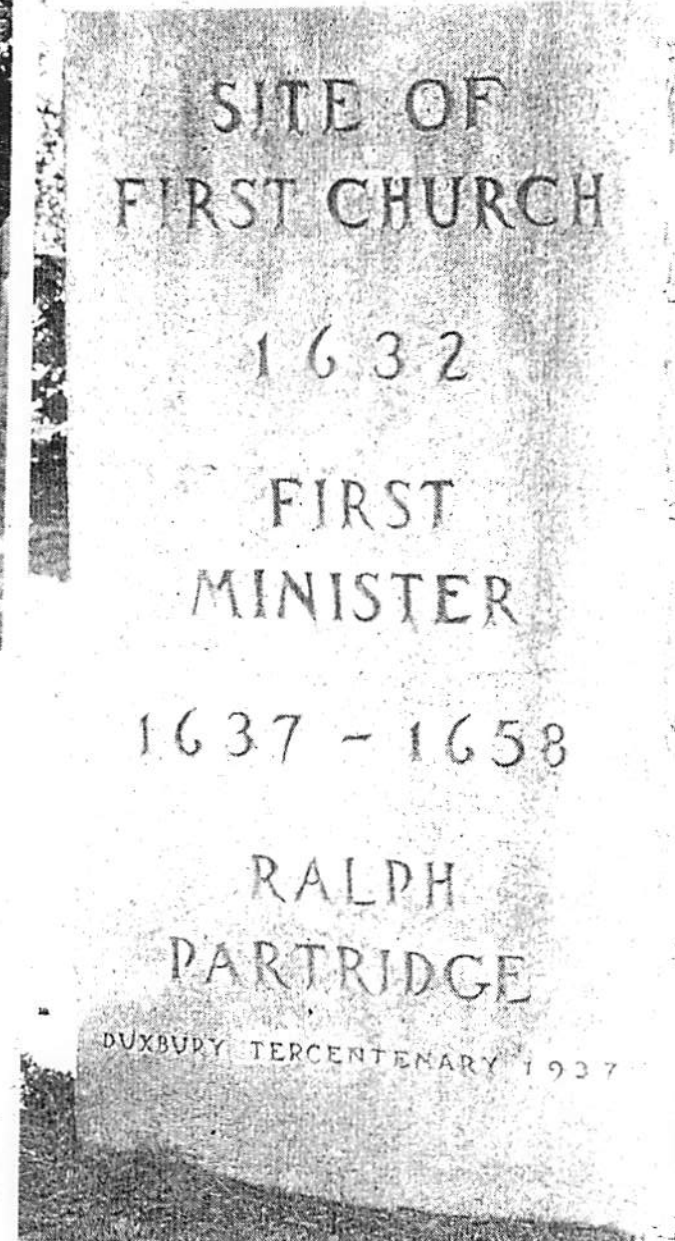
Within the 6 New England states you could find most every kind of cemetery one could imagine as to type, size and denomination.

The stones within the cemetery boundaries are made of slate, red sandstone, brownstone, marble, steel, granite, bronze and maybe even plastic. The composition of these monuments denotes the popularity of its material during a particular era in New England at the time of death. In our different states you will find memorials to mark the resting place of famous people -- Tom Thumb in Bridgeport, Conn., Commodore Edward Ernest Preble in Portland, Me., Lizzie Borden in Fall River, Mass., President Franklin Pierce in Concord, N.H., Commodore Perry in Newport, R.I., and Sir Isaac Newton in Newfane, Vt.

The carving and engravings of the stones in our cemeteries inform us of the craftsmanship of our forefathers. And from reading the epitaphs we can learn much about the people who settled our country. Some of these engravings are cheerful and amusing, while others are



Laurel Freeman, Daniel White and the Rev. Francis Turke stand beside reconstructed stones that had fallen apart.



Sign in cemetery.

Photos by Lindy Blaisdell



and full of Yankee ingenuity. If one would ask what a typical cemetery would be like in the New England states I should think it would be situated on a knoll or hillside with trees and shrubs here and there, and all types of headstones (old as well as new). To me it would be very similar to this cemetery in Duxbury.

I would like to congratulate the officials of Duxbury and the commissioners of the cemetery as well as Laurel Freeman, the former superintendent, and Daniel White, the present superintendent, for having had their cemetery honored with this dedicatory ceremony. We from the New England Cemetery Association are proud that they are active members of our organization.

Remarks of Duncan Munro, President, American Cemetery Association:



Duncan Munro

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to represent the American Cemetery Association in this ceremony honoring a cemetery in my home state, and even more of a pleasure since I personally know the people involved in maintaining this cemetery as a sacred and historic place.

Memorialization of the dead has been a tradition of man for as long as he has been on this earth. From the simple

Myles Standish grave with pointed stones marking graves of daughter and daughter-in-law.

stone mounds made by primitive man to the great tombs and pyramids erected by those of the more civilized societies, we have been able to trace man's life down through centuries. Man's instinctive desire to be remembered beyond the death is in the Bible -- Ecclesiastes; No. 44. "They be of them that have left a name behind them that their praise might be related, and some there be which have no memorial who are perished as through they had never been."

This passage bears out the importance of memorialization. Here in this cemetery we see the earliest forms of memorials in our country with the simple dignified markers to those who first settled this land.

Gladstone is given credit for a statement that in brief says, "Show me your cemeteries and I will know the strength of your people." All things have to be built on a foundation and the greatest strength of our nation lies in its faith in God and trust with the past.

The best reminder of the past is to see the great memorials of marble and granite that have been erected to both individual leaders and to important happenings in our history. These great memorials combined with the simple gravestones of all our people, scattered in thousands of cemeteries across our land tell the history of the past.

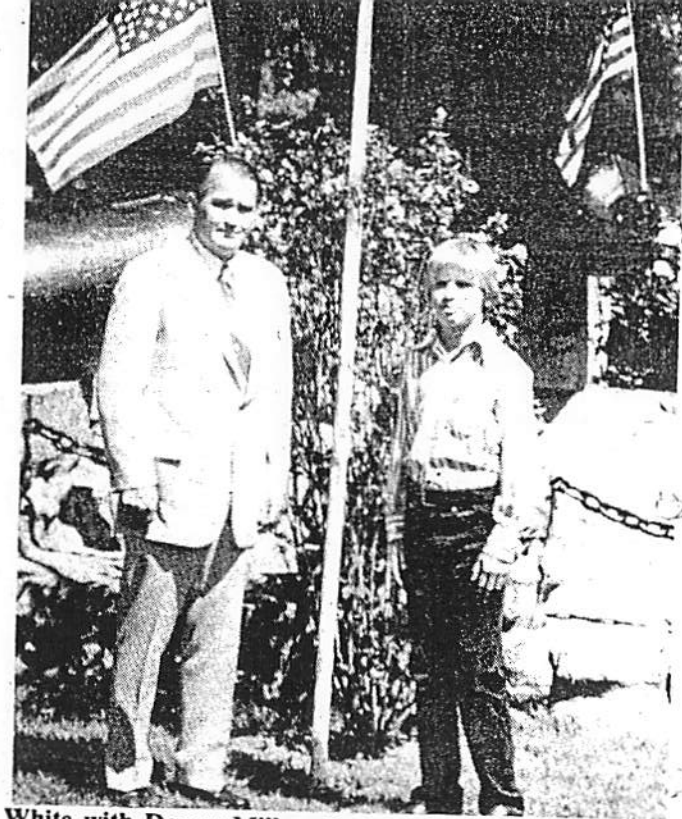
The great strength of our country lies with all the people. Thus all forms of memorials are important.

In the fast pace of life today, we must retain the ties with the past; and the place where this can best be done is in our cemeteries. Those of us

in the cemetery industry find many who wish to depart from tradition and say that there is no need for memorialization or records that someone existed. We find some who advocate the practice of scattering human remains to the 4 winds. This practice is not proving to be beneficial, and many times those left behind have some after thought and wish some form of memorialization. It need not be an elaborate or expensive memorial or even any individual memorial at all, but there is a need for some permanent place for the deceased to be placed. History has borne out this fact; thus the cemetery plays a vital part to families around the world, because it is the final resting place for all. Today with the interest of many people in tracing their ancestors, the cemeteries have assumed a new importance as a very valuable source of genealogical information.

This ground where we stand today is proof of the dedication of the citizens of Duxbury to the fact that memorialization is important as through the years this cemetery has been and continues to be maintained as a great reminder of those who have gone before. You, the citizens of Duxbury, are to be commended for this dedication as many other such cemeteries have long since disappeared with the passage of time because no one had the interest to preserve and care for them.

It is thus fitting that today the American Cemetery Association, the oldest cemetery organization, honors the Myles Standish Cemetery, the oldest maintained



Daniel White with Danny Miller. Danny raises and lowers flag every day and has done so for the past year and a half.

cemetery, as the final act of our part in the Bicentennial celebration of our country.

We are all proud of the people of Duxbury -- past and present -- who have preserved this vital heritage of our past. This plaque that we now unveil will be a permanent testament to your dedicated efforts.

Remarks of Philip Colantuono:

Here in the beautiful setting of Plymouth Bay, we are participating in the dedication of a memorial plaque recognizing the Myles Standish Burying Grounds as the oldest maintained cemetery in the United States.

I am deeply honored, as a first generation son of immigrants, to assume a part

in memorializing the resting place of so many of our first immigrants who settled in this Plymouth area.



Philip Colantuono

From time immemorial, people have buried their dead:
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some in a plot of ground where they were born; others resorting to the grandeur of crypts and mausoleums; and the pyramids of Egypt bear testimony to the attempt of a nation to pay a lasting tribute to those who lived and died and went forth on the wings of death back to their Maker.

The burying ground in Plymouth enjoys a splendid panoramic view of Massachusetts Bay, framed by the domes and spires of the buildings below. There lie the resting places of Governor William Bradford and many othr of our founding fathers.

However, more illustrious is the Myles Standish Burying Grounds. This handsome and well kept cemetery was the site of the town's first meeting house and was used from 1637 to 1787, so that the decay of modernity has not touched its majesty.

Here are buried Myles Standish and Jonathan Alden. Gentle winds whisper in our ears that the bodies of John and Priscilla Alden are buried here, together with all of the other leading characters of Longfellow's poem, *The Courtship of Myles Standish*.

There are those among us who seek out the cultural treasures to be found in graveyards. Scattered throughout New England you may discover the graves of illustrious persons, epitaphs, unique headstones, grand monuments, the works of

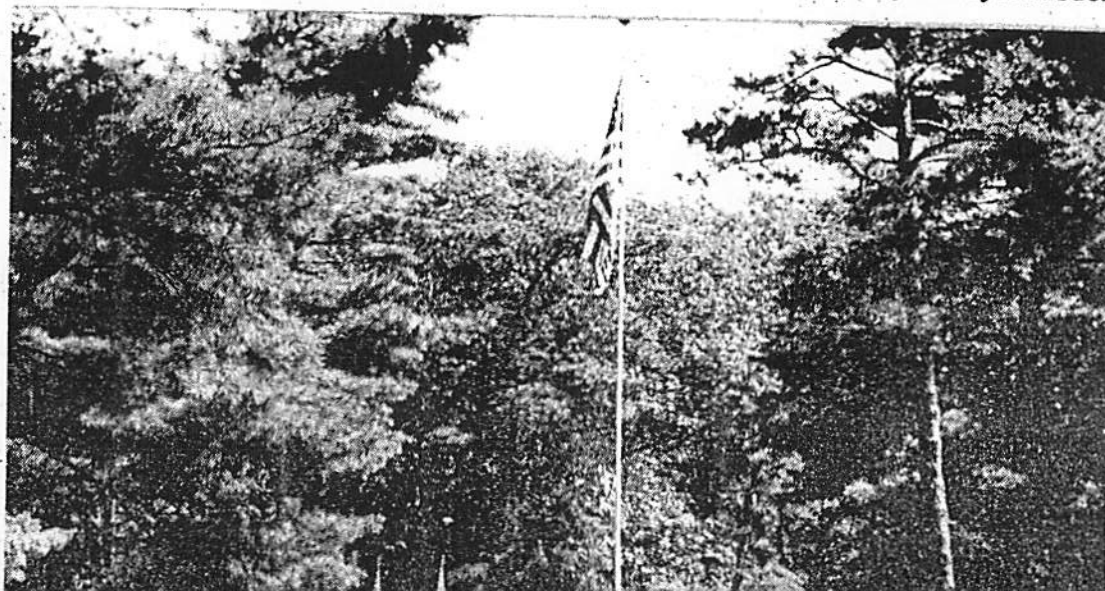
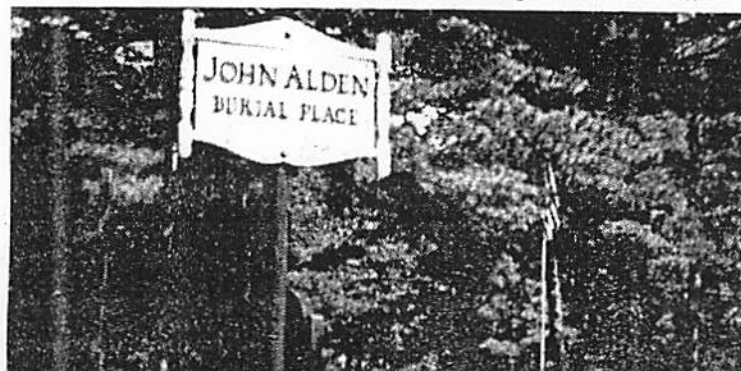
noted sculptors, and other items of absorbing and lasting interest to the "cemetery browser."

However, you will find no graveyard more impressive than this simple setting commemorating the last resting place of many of those who were the founders of our great and magnificent nation.



Myles Standish grave.

Photos by Lindy Blaisdell





Left, Alden stones as restored by Alden Kindred.

Below: Charles Fargo, Edmund Dondero and cemetery trustee chairman Donald Jordan and Mrs. Jordan.



Stone, dedicating cemetery.

From an 1891 Clipping

Last Saturday afternoon in spite of the bleak north wind and spits of hail and snow, Fred Knapp and a number of other gentlemen made another step toward the discovery of the burial place of Myles Standish - something which has puzzled antiquarians and historians greatly, and concerning which many theories have been advanced.

The party opened a grave in the old cemetery on Pembroke Rd. from Hall's Corner, the selectmen having granted permission. In the grave were found the bones of a woman of average height, the dark hair clinging in masses to the skull, and rotten boards still remaining of the rude coffin. Around the hands which laid across the body was tied or folded some homespun of cotton and wool - once white, with a single thread stripe of blue or green. It was apparently a bandage to keep the hands in place. The skull was very perfect, all the teeth being present and but little worn, and while they were a little irregular as to the incisors, were sound and white. They indicated that the owner might have been in the neighborhood of 30 years of age when death came. A second excavation made near by disclosed nothing.

How does this have any bearing on Myles Standish's

burial place? Well, it is as follows:

Somewhere about 1858, or earlier, Benjamin Prior lived in Duxbury and was a ship builder, and a hale, hearty man at that time, blessed with a good memory, and resided nearly opposite the old graveyard when a boy. His father and his grandfather lived in the same house - now a ruin - and the grandfather, when a boy of 10, attended Myles Standish's funeral. He told his son of it, and pointed to the grave. The second Prior told his son of the spot, and said it was marked by 2 3-cornered stones. Benjamin Prior related the tradition to Mrs. Ruth Hall, a daughter of Olive Standish, and she made the following memorandum at the time:

"Miles Standish 1660 the first was Buried in the old graveyard, too three Corner stones to his grave."

Benjamin Prior was born in 1775, and died in 1867 at the Duxbury almshouse, at the age of 92. He was about 10 years old when his father told him the story. Mrs. Hall put the memorandum away, and her daughter, Caroline Hall, who resides on the old homestead, though cognizant of its existence, was unable to find it until quite recently. In 1887 the fact of the memorandum came to your correspondent, and a visit was made to the old cemetery. Sure enough, nearly in the centre of the plot of

UNVEILING

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ground stood 2 pyramidal stones, 3 faces to each, and both roughly slit from some field boulder. Time and the weather had made marks of age on them, but their bases showed they had been reset within a short time. This was done by a man who had charge of the cemetery. On the same line with this grave were hollows which indicated old places of burial.

In April, 1889, the Rural Improvement Society, got permission to open the grave and one adjoining, and this was done. In the one marked by the 3-cornered stone was found the skeleton of a woman of probably 40 years of age; the bones were much decayed but the teeth indicated considerable use. Dark hair clung to the base of the skull, and a cloth of linsey woolsey of a white and blue stripe was put over the head and secured around the face by common pins similar to those we use nowadays. About 5 feet away from this grave and parallel with it another was opened and found to contain the remains of a man about 5 feet 7 inches in height. He had evidently been advanced in years at the time of his death, as one tooth showed much wear. At the back of the skull was a small quantity of whitish hair a couple of inches in length.

The grave opened on Saturday last week was about 6 feet away from this last described and parallel with it, and the coffin was put together with wrought iron nails.

A corroboration of the Prior tradition is the following: When a girl, Ruth Hall and her mother one afternoon visited old Dr. Wadsworth at his home near the cemetery in question, and 2 gentlemen called on the doctor while they were present. During the conversation the doctor said, "Come out with me and I will show you where Myles

the house, and after being gone a while returned, Dr. Wadsworth remarking, "It was singular that they could find 2 3-cornered stones to mark his grave."

Standish's Will

Standish's will states his wish to be laid as near as conveniently may be to "my two dear daughters, Lora Standish, my daughter, and Mary Standish, my daughter-in-law." Mary was the daughter of John Dingley, of Marshfield, and married Standish's third son, Josiah, in 1654, dying that same year. Standish died Oct. 3, 1656 O.S., and his will refers to his "dear loving wife Barbara" as still living. In 1659 she witnessed Elizabeth Hopkins' will. The directness of the tradition and its corroborating circumstances seem to prove that Myles Standish's burial place is no longer a mystery. On either side are the bones of 2 women, one buried some years before the other, and the other about the same date the man was. Captain Standish probably set the stones over Lora Standish's grave as a mark or memorial, and after generations could easily confound the two when the deceased were in the same family, and the daughter's resting place was the most conspicuous.

Creative Arts Council Family Day

On Sunday, Sept. 25, the Creative Arts Council of the Duxbury PTA will sponsor a family esplanade to be held at the Middle School football field from 3-5.

The event will headline the Calliope County String Band. This band was warmly received last year as part of the Creative Arts Council's program of supplementing the current curriculum with varied cultural events.

Some Details

Many exciting cultural

"happenings" are planned for this year including a poet in residence at the high school.

In an effort to fund these projects, Joan Flavell Collins well known local portraitist and courtroom artist, has agreed to do a portrait for the winner of a raffle. Tickets will be available at the esplanade.

Remember to mark your calendar for Sept. 25 and bring the whole family for some "knee slapping" good fun.

Republican House Tour

Tickets will soon be mailed to Duxbury Republican Women's Club members for the third annual Heritage House tour on Tuesday, Oct. 4.

The tour, from 10-2, will feature 6 Duxbury homes. There are perfectly restored and maintained colonials, large comfortable colonial reproductions and a chic contemporary that utilizes solar energy.

This house tour has become a tradition. Visitors have learned to expect and receive a look into Duxbury's finest homes.

Refreshments will be served at the First Parish Church. Call Connie Briggeman (934-6127) to reserve tickets. The number is limited, so don't be disappointed.

ART FELLOWSHIPS

Applications for \$3,500 Artists Fellowships in filmmaking, video art, music composition, and choreography are now available at the Massachusetts Arts and Humanities Foundation. Any artist who is a resident of Massachusetts, over 18 and not enrolled as a student is eligible to apply. Applications must be completed and returned to the Foundation office by Oct. 17.

Sandwich division. Reback said the Coho is a different genus from the Atlantic salmon. Locally, this summer, there have been only 5 catches

of Coho reported: 2 in the North River, one at Scortan Creek, Sandwich, one off Green Harbor (gill netted), and one in Plymouth Harbor.



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awarded in each field. Applications for visual arts and creative writers will be available in Jan. 1978.

For details call Jennifer Dowley (723-3851).

Around Town

Mr. and Mrs. William Leonard of Bay Rd., are parents of a daughter, Margaret Mary, born at the Newton Wellesley Hospital, Aug. 22. Grandparents are Mrs. Edwin Leonard III of Duxbury and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Millis of Boston. Great grandparents are Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Leonard, Mr. and Mrs. Steeves Fulton, all of Duxbury, and Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Fitzgerald of Boston.

James Pye and Nelson Saunders were idly fishing last Saturday for flounder at Howland's Landing when a 5-pound, 18-inch fish was hooked. It took off like a bluefish. Neither Pye nor Saunders recognized the fish, but after checking a manual, Nelson identified it as a Coho. He used clam bait. As you will read elsewhere in this issue, the Division of Marine Fisheries this spring released over 4,000 juvenile salmon (Cohos) in the Indianhead River near Pembroke. We called the Department of Fisheries & Wild Life in Westboro, who directed us to Kenneth Reback at the

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